

Support for Pro-Climate and Ecofascist Extremism

Correlates and Intersections

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ABSTRACT: Environmental issues have inspired violent action on both extremes of the political spectrum. Yet, there is a dearth of research on social psychology of environmental extremism. We provide the first empirical exploration of socio-demographic and psychological correlates of support for pro-climate and ecofascist extremism, drawing on two online surveys conducted in the UK in 2020/2021. We focus on the differences and commonalities in the profile of supporters of the two types of extremism. We find that pro-climate extremist action is associated with both left- and right-wing political ideology and we highlight the importance of social norms, political efficacy, and neuroticism, for future studies.

KEYWORDS: environment, extremism, ecofascism, climate change, left-wing, right-wing

“The next wave of extremists will be green” declared a headline of an article in the *Foreign Policy* magazine a few years ago.¹ Its author argued that the specter of a catastrophic climate change in conjugation with seemingly little effectiveness of democratic and nonviolent ways of redressing it is radicalizing environmental activists, traditionally conceived of as politically left-wing. One year later, a different article headline in the *New York Review of Books* called attention to the ascending “menace of eco-fascism,”² the far-right take on environmentalism, which combines ethnocentric nationalist, anti-immigration and environmental themes.

In the journalistic domain, the two articles illustrate the recent noticeable rise of interest in and concern about extreme, potentially violent action framed around the need to defend the environment.³ An action that could originate in both the left-wing and right-wing parts of the political spectrum. This level of attention is unmatched by the academic literature. Unlike in the case of Islamist and to a lesser degree “traditional” far-right extremism, there are virtually no studies on individual level correlates or drivers of environmental extremism of one kind or another. The extant literature is mostly limited to either descriptive historical accounts of various radical environmental movements and organizations,⁴ conceptual and theoretical discussions of terminologies,

¹ Jamie Barlett, “The Next Wave of Extremists Will Be Green,” *Foreign Policy*, September 01, 2017.

² Matthew Phelan, “The Menace of Eco-Fascism,” *The New York Review of Books*, October 22, 2018.

³ See also: Joel Achenbach, “Two mass killings a world apart share a common theme: ‘ecofascism,’” *The Washington Post*, August 18, 2019; Philip Oltermann, “German far right infiltrates green groups with call to protect the land,” *The Observer*, June 28, 2020; John H. Richardson, “The Unlikely New Generation of Unabomber Acolytes,” *New York Magazine*, December 11, 2018; *The Economist*, “What if climate activists turn to terrorism?,” *The Economist*, July 04, 2020.

⁴ See, for example: Bernhard Forchtner, *The far right and the environment: politics, discourse and communication* (2020); Don Liddick, *Eco-terrorism: radical environmental and animal liberation movements* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2006); Leslie James Pickering, *The Earth Liberation Front, 1997–2002* (Portland, OR: Arissa Media Group, 2007); Bron Taylor, “Religion, violence and radical environmentalism: From earth first! to the Unabomber to the earth liberation front,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (1998): 1–42.

philosophies and ideologies linked to radical environmentalism,⁵ or descriptive statistics of the number and type of criminal incidents.⁶

Although the interest in the relationship between climate change and terrorism is rapidly growing, the vast majority of studies still focus on the indirect effect of climate change on terrorism in the Global South, as evidenced by the special issue on climate change and terrorism in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, whose editor noted that the call for papers did not lead to any “expressions of interest from anyone wanting to write on the topic of environmental extremism or climate activism.”⁷ In this article, apart from investigating the correlates of eco-fascism, we explore precisely this issue – environmental extremism driven by concerns about climate change. Not in the Global South, but in the heart of the relatively much less directly affected (by climate change) Global North, specifically the United Kingdom.

A recent study argues that environmentalism will become “one of the central political issues of the next decades,” as it is developing into a “meta-ideology,” which is becoming a part of every ideological position, including the (far) left-and the (far) right political discourses and beliefs.⁸ According to polls, climate change has been one of the most if not *the* most important issue for voters in the recent national elections in the UK, Germany, and Denmark, to name just a few countries.⁹ Therefore, “rather than a confrontation between environmentalists and antienvironmentalists, what may lie ahead is an encounter between competing environmentalisms.”¹⁰

Our motivation for writing this article was to explore what characterizes people that tend to support the *extreme* positions of these environmentalisms and to what extent the two extremes, on the left and the right of the political spectrum, are mutually exclusive with respect to these individual characteristics. By environmental extremism we mean the use or threat of violence, including against property, justified by the protec-

⁵ See, for example: Betsy Hartmann, “*The Greening of Hate: An Environmental Essay*,” in M. Potok, ed., *Greenwash: Nativists, Environmentalism and the Hypocrisy of Hate* (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010); Baša Lubarda, “Beyond Ecofascism? Far-Right Ecologism (FRE) as a Framework for Future Inquiries,” *Environmental Values*, Vol. 29, No. 6 (2020): 713–32; Rueda, “Neoecofascism: The Example of the United States,” *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (2020), p. 95; Michael E. Zimmerman, “*Ecofascism: An enduring temptation*,” in Michael E. Zimmerman, ed., *Environmental philosophy: From animal rights to radical ecology* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2004).

⁶ See, for example: Jennifer Varriale Carson, Gary LaFree, and Laura Dugan, “Terrorist and Non-Terrorist Criminal Attacks by Radical Environmental and Animal Rights Groups in the United States, 1970–2007,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (2012): 295–319; Paola Andrea Spadaro, “Climate Change, Environmental Terrorism, Eco-Terrorism and Emerging Threats,” *Journal of Strategic Security*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (2020): 58–80.

⁷ Andrew Silke and John Morrison, “Gathering Storm: An Introduction to the Special Issue on Climate Change and Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 34, No. 5 (2022): 888.

⁸ Rueda, *Neoecofascism*, p. 95.

⁹ Damian Carrington, “Climate crisis affects how majority will vote in UK election – poll,” *Guardian*, (2019); Martin Kuebler, “German election: Is this the climate election, or isn’t it?,” *DW*, (2021); Rune Stubager and Kasper Moller Hansen, *Klimavalget: folketingsvalget 2019* (Kbh.: Djof, 2021).

¹⁰ Rueda, *Neoecofascism*, p. 116.

tion of the environment. We explore the socio-demographic and psychological correlates of pro-climate extremism (thought to be associated with the left-wing political ideology) and eco-fascism (thought to be associated with the right-wing political ideology), drawing on two on-line surveys of white British participants conducted in 2020 and 2021. By doing so we provide the first empirical exploration of socio-demographic and psychological correlates of support for pro-climate and ecofascist extremist action and ideology, which helps us to understand what distinguishes the profile of supporters of the former from the latter and where potential overlaps are. This contributes to our understanding the two phenomena and suggests ways they could be politically addressed. This article also helps to guide future studies by pointing to potential drivers and mechanisms of environmental extremism, which could be investigated further, also using different research designs (e.g., experimental).

The remainder of the article proceeds in three parts. We begin by briefly describing the ideological roots and contemporary manifestations of both left-wing and right-wing environmental extremism and discuss their overlaps. Then, we describe our data and explain our research design, which is exploratory rather than hypotheses-testing. Finally, we present our results in the form of descriptive statistics and correlation/regression tables and discuss their implication for future research.

Left-wing environmental extremism

The ideological roots of the contemporary left-wing radical environmentalism are usually traced to the turn of the 19th and 20th century in the United States, specifically to the preservationist movement whose foremost representative was John Muir (1838–1914), the founder of the Sierra Club (1882).¹¹ Muir and his fellow preservationist contemporaries regarded wilderness as sacred and described nature in a highly spiritualistic vocabulary where the “unitary consciousness regarding the interrelatedness of all life” was one of the central themes, while destructive human activities were viewed as acts of desecration.¹² The sacredness of nature and the rejection of human superiority over it, which was inherent in the dominant interpretation of Christianity at the time, was also professed by Edward Abbey (1928–1989), who had a profound influence on the radical environmentalist movement. His novel *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975) was inspired by real acts of ecological sabotage (ecotage) against targets deemed destructive to the nature (e.g., new commercial developments in wilderness) that had been already occurring in the US at the time.¹³ The book gave the new generation

¹¹ Elżbieta Posłuszna, *Environmental and animal rights extremism, terrorism, and national security* (Amsterdam: Elsevier/Butterworth-Heinemann, 2015); Bron Taylor, “The Tributaries of Radical Environmentalism,” *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2008): 27–61.

¹² Taylor, *The Tributaries of Radical Environmentalism*.

¹³ *Ibid.*

of radical environmentalists a new term, “monkeywrenching,” which is synonymous to ecotage.

This new generation of environmental activists emerged from the various anti-establishment and counter-cultural currents of 1960s.¹⁴ Its members believed that more confrontational action would be effective in bringing progress on the environmental front.¹⁵ They were armed with a new environmental philosophy and ethics that emerged in 1970s, when the already circulating ideas about the sacredness and interconnectedness of the ecosystem gave rise to the so-called “deep ecology” – formulated, among others, by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess (1912–2009).¹⁶ Although deep ecology became an umbrella term for a multitude of environmental approaches and attitudes, its unifying theme is the belief that “nature is not an ordinary collection of live and inanimate beings, but a biogenic whole,”¹⁷ something more than the mere sum of its components and thus morally superior to them. Biocentric equality, another concept of deep ecology, holds that every part of the ecosystem, the biogenic whole, has the same intrinsic value and should have the right to live and function within the system.¹⁸ On the one hand, this implies that also human life is valuable and sacred. On the other hand, if humans start to threaten the biogenic whole by pursuing their excessive needs, violence in the name of protecting the ecosystem could be justified.

The 1970s and 1980s saw the formation of several organizations committed to the protection of the natural environment through direct radical actions – Earth First!, Greenpeace, and Sea Shepherd to name the most prominent ones. These organizations quickly spread from the US to Europe and beyond. All of them adhered to nonviolence with respect to harming human lives, but the same reservation did not apply to damaging inanimate targets (such as bulldozers, whaling ships, chainsaws etc.) in acts of ecotage, which became widespread. After all, the symbol of Earth First! was a monkey wrench with a stone hammer. In 1992, some of the more radical British members of Earth First! established the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) in the UK and what followed was a campaign of ecotage, mainly arson, both in Europe and the US. The ELF was characterized as “a blend of anarchists and apocalyptic extremists whose philosophies are rooted in Marxism, socialism, feminism, postmodernism and Eastern religions”¹⁹ and although the actions associated with it did not lead to any fatalities,²⁰ ELF and similar organizations (e.g., the Earth Liberation Army) soon earned the label “extremism” and “eco-terrorism,” especially when attacks against property by

¹⁴ Posłuszna, *Environmental and animal rights extremism, terrorism, and national security*.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Posłuszna, *Environmental and animal rights extremism, terrorism, and national security*; Taylor, *The Tributaries of Radical Environmentalism*.

¹⁷ Posłuszna, *Environmental and animal rights extremism, terrorism, and national security*, p. 108.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Spadaro, *Climate Change, Environmental Terrorism, Eco-Terrorism and Emerging Threats*, p. 63.

²⁰ Carson et al., *Terrorist and Non-Terrorist Criminal Attacks by Radical Environmental and Animal Rights Groups in the United States, 1970–2007*.

radical environmentalist became legally classified as terrorism in the US in 2002.²¹ With the rising awareness of the human-caused climate change and its threat posed to the ecosystem, a number of direct actions have been targeting the largest greenhouse gasses pollutants such as coal mines and power plants (e.g., repeated efforts by Greenpeace to disrupt the Kingsnorth coal power station). New organizations with a sole focus on the climate change issue and radical tactics emerged, for example the Extinction Rebellion (XR). Although they never harmed a human being, both Greenpeace and XR appeared in the UK counter-terrorism police material as examples of extremist organizations in 2020.²²

As they regularly connect the issue of climate change with the aim of achieving social (climate) justice, and since the attitude toward climate change has been (at least until recently) strongly polarized along the left-right political identification,²³ the pro-climate radical and extremist environmental organizations have been perceived as rooted in left-wing politics.

Right-wing environmental extremism

Although the concern for the environment and the green politics are in people's mind associated with the political left, the history of right-wing environmental extremism is in fact as old as the US preservationist movement described in the previous section.²⁴ The ideological roots of the contemporary right-wing environmental extremism, sometimes referred to as (neo)ecofascism, stretch to the German Romanticism of the 19th century, which conjured up the sacred mystic union between the German "blood and soil," in opposition to the rationalist, civic, contractual nationalism originating in the Enlightenment France.²⁵ The idea of the intrinsic connection between the nation and its environment was at the heart of the *völkisch* movement, which was concerned with the idea of the return to the land and the re-discovery and re-forging of the links between the people (*Volk*) and the nature that birthed them, thus achieving a sort of mental and physical purity and power.²⁶ Biehl and Staudenmaier provide an excellent account of how this early concern for the health of nature in the context of rapid industrialization and modernization became bound with the concern for the health of

²¹ Steve Vanderheiden, "Radical environmentalism in an age of antiterrorism," *Environmental Politics*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (2008): 299–318.

²² Spadaro, *Climate Change, Environmental Terrorism, Eco-Terrorism and Emerging Threats*. The Police later apologized and withdrew the two organizations from the material.

²³ Matthew J. Hornsey, Emily A. Harris, Paul G. Bain, and Kelly S. Fielding, "Meta-analyses of the determinants and outcomes of belief in climate change," *Nature Climate Change*, Vol. 6, No. 6 (2016): 622–6; Kirsti M. Jylhä, Pontus Strimling, and Jens Rydgren, "Climate Change Denial among Radical Right-Wing Supporters," *Sustainability*, Vol. 12, No. 23 (2020): 10226.

²⁴ Lubarda, *Beyond Ecofascism?*

²⁵ Rueda, *Neoeofascism*.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

the nation in a decisively xenophobic, anti-Semitic, and aggressive way.²⁷ Ultimately, the *völkisch* movement led to the formation of a strong green wing of the German Nazi party, which in turn brought the first comprehensive environmental legislation to the world.

In the ecofascist thought, nature is in need of protection because it is a part of the ethnic nation and the nation is part of it. If nature is destroyed it reflects back negatively on the state of the nation. Similarly, if the nation is weakened or “contaminated” by alien groups without the same mystical connection to the soil, nature suffers.²⁸ Thus, the main driver of the ecofascist pro-environmental stance is “related to identity anxieties rather than to a progressive longing for environmental justice.”²⁹ These anxieties concern the state of the nation and the individual bodies making up that nation. The worry is that modernization and globalization lead to social decadence, which produces bodies no longer fit to hold their own in the general competition between nations and races, also for resources, destined to be replaced by more strong-willed and hardened people.³⁰

Until recently, ecofascism was regarded as a marginal position in the far-right movements.³¹ However, with increasing anxieties about the state of the ecosystem in the general population, combining environmental concerns with the traditional tropes of the far-right such as authoritarianism, illiberalism and anti-immigration becomes an attractive position,³² not least because people under the condition of fear and uncertainty have a natural tendency for ethnocentrism and authoritarianism.³³

Ecofascism has also far less scruples about violence against humans, in contrast to the left-wing environmental extremism.³⁴ In March 2019, an Australian Brenton Tarrant killed 51 and injured 40 Muslims in the Christchurch mosque attack in New Zealand. In his manifesto, Tarrant explicitly described himself as an ecofascist. Five months later, in an anti-Latino attack in El Paso (US), Patrick Crusius killed 23 people and injured 23 more. In his own manifesto, like his professed model Tarrant, he rants about environmental degradation and the threat of immigration. In a final example

²⁷ *Ecofascism: lessons from the German experience* (Edinburgh ; San Francisco: AK Press, 1995).

²⁸ Kristy Campion, “Defining Ecofascism: Historical Foundations and Contemporary Interpretations in the Extreme Right,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, (2021): 1–19; Brian Hughes, Dave Jones, and Amarnath Amarasingam, “Ecofascism: An Examination of the Far-Right/Ecology Nexus in the Online Space,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 5, No. 34 (2022): 997–1023.

²⁹ Rueda, *Neoecofascism*, p. 99.

³⁰ Graham Macklin, “The Extreme Right, Climate Change and Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 34, No. 5 (2022): 979–96; Rueda, *Neoecofascism*.

³¹ Rueda, *Neoecofascism*.

³² Eszter Szenes, “Neo-Nazi environmentalism: The linguistic construction of ecofascism in a Nordic Resistance Movement manifesto,” *Journal for Deradicalization*, Vol. 27 (2021): 146–92.

³³ Immo Fritsche, J. Christopher Cohrs, Thomas Kessler, and Judith Bauer, “Global warming is breeding social conflict: The subtle impact of climate change threat on authoritarian tendencies,” *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (2012): 1–10.

³⁴ Macklin, *The Extreme Right, Climate Change and Terrorism*.

from Europe, two members of the Green Brigade, a self-proclaimed ecofascist group in Sweden, were arrested for planning assassinations in December 2020.

Overlaps between left- and right-wing environmental extremism

Both left- and right-wing environmental extremism cover a large turf in terms of varieties of ideas, strategies, and goals of different organizations and individuals associated with them, making these labels open to conceptual criticism. Nevertheless, as general categories indicating broad ideological foundations, one affiliated with revolutionary social justice and the other with ethnocentric nationalism, we regard them as useful. That said, there are gray zones and overlaps that enable some activists to slide in and out between the two orientations or cherry pick between them, while trying to maintain an independent approach.³⁵ The example of the former is William H. Stoetzer who was a member of Earth First! and ELF and spent nearly a year suspended in a hammock strung between branches of a Giant Redwood tree in 2007–2008 and went on to join Atomwaffen Division, a neo-Nazi terrorist network, eight years later.³⁶ The infamous Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber, is the example of the latter type of activists, having denounced both far-right as well as leftist politics.³⁷

While Stoetzer is likely just a confused individual looking for a sense of purpose irrespective of political ideology, Kaczynski, a highly intelligent man, embodies some of the intersections of extreme left- and right – wing environmentalism. These are anti-modernism and protection of pure nature, whose value is held superior to that of individual humans, who are but parts of it.³⁸ Both extreme tendencies reject the human-nature dualism and talk about nature in highly romanticized, spiritual and mystical way. Both see humans as intrinsically bound with nature in a biogenic whole, the latter threatened by the excesses of the former.

Importantly, the ethnocentric and xenophobic element of ecofascism has been present in the radical left-wing environmental movement since its inception. The early American environmental movement was penetrated by eugenic ideas and the theme of purity of nature went often hand in hand with the theme of purity of genes where immigrants were viewed as a biological as well as cultural threat to the environment.³⁹ The concern over migration became pronounced in the environmental movement again in 1960s with the theme of the “population bomb” in the Third World, which became associated with deforestation and pollution, requiring in turn the policy of population

³⁵ Michael Loadenthal, “Feral fascists and deep green guerrillas: infrastructural attack and accelerationist terror,” *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (2022): 169–208.

³⁶ Nate Thayer, “Secret Identities of U.S. Nazi Terror Group Revealed,” (2019).

³⁷ Jake Hanrahan, “Inside the Unabomber’s odd and furious online revival,” *Wired*, (2018).

³⁸ Zimmerman, *Ecofascism: An enduring temptation*.

³⁹ Hartmann, *The Greening of Hate: An Environmental Essay*.

control.⁴⁰ The defense of environment through anti-immigration positions was also espoused by Herbert Gruhl, one of the key protagonist of the German Green political movement, who then left the movement to establish his own right-wing party, blaming the Green movement for sacrificing the “concern for ecology in favor of a leftist ideology of emancipation.”⁴¹ Similar splits between those who linked immigration with threat to environment and others who opposed such linkage had accompanied the Sierra Club until 1990s.⁴²

Another potential point of convergence between the left- and right-wing environmental extremism is the conviction that normal politics would never fix the problem of the crumbling ecosystem and that some form of illiberal and violent imposition of a new “natural order” would become necessary.⁴³ Some extremist organizations such as the Mexican Individualistas Tendiendo a lo Salvaje (Individualities Tending to the Wild) have already been combining eco-fascist ideas with the traditional eco-anarchist approaches.⁴⁴

However, although some elements in the far-right accept the idea of climate change and try to fit it into their own narratives,⁴⁵ this issue seems to be still one that splits the left from the right, politically speaking.⁴⁶ This is why in this paper an extremist pro-climate action is regarded to be prototypically “leftist,” while an extremist environmental anti-immigration action prototypically “rightist.”

The present study

Design

In this study, we are interested in exploring correlates of both left- and right-wing environmental extremism as well as their intersections with respect to socio-demographic and psychological variables. We draw on two online surveys of British participants, which we originally conducted for a different study using an experimental design to investigate the effect of climate change threat on social majority attitude toward minorities and climate refugees.⁴⁷ In the current study, we restrict the sample to the

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Sam Knights, “The Climate Movement Must Be Ready To Challenge Rising Right-Wing Environmentalism,” *Jacobin*, (2020).

⁴² Rueda, *Neoeocofascism*.

⁴³ Lubarda, *Beyond Ecofascism?*

⁴⁴ Spadaro, *Climate Change, Environmental Terrorism, Eco-Terrorism and Emerging Threats*.

⁴⁵ Daniel Trilling, “Flag, faith and fear for the planet – how the far right is exploiting climate change for its own ends,” *Prospect*, (2020).

⁴⁶ Hornsey et al., *Meta-analyses of the determinants and outcomes of belief in climate change*; Jylhä et al., *Climate Change Denial among Radical Right-Wing Supporters*.

⁴⁷ Sadi Shanaah, Immo Fritsche, and Mathias Osmundsen, “The Effect of Climate Change Threat on Public Attitudes toward Ethnic and Religious Minorities and Climate Refugees,” Unpublished manuscript.

participants who were in the control condition, i.e. were not primed with climate change threatening information.⁴⁸ This random sample of participants in the control conditions of the original study was presented with a neutral list of information on the history and geography of Britain.

The design of our study is exploratory in that we do not set out to test specific hypotheses regarding socio-demographic and psychological correlates of environmental extremism and instead explore a number of potentially relevant variables that were included in the survey. This is mainly due to the fact that the existing literature does not offer many predictions to build on with respect to environmental extremism. Nevertheless, the variables we include in the study are not completely random as they are drawn from the general literature on radicalization, extremism, and terrorism. With respect to socio-demographic variables, this literature suggests that age is negatively correlated with political extremism⁴⁹ and that men are more likely than women to engage in radical activities,⁵⁰ especially on the far-right.⁵¹ It is also generally believed that right-wing radicalism and extremism attracts the less educated and less wealthy, whereas left-wing extremism finds more sympathy among the university educated middle-class.⁵²

Identity is also important to mobilization, including radical and extremist actions.⁵³ When people feel strongly connected to certain collectives, their readiness to take action

⁴⁸ The reason for this restriction is that the theory that underpinned the original study posits an unconscious negative effect of climate change threat on attitudes toward out-groups and so the experimental manipulation (a list of information about future negative climate change impacts on Britain) was followed by a delay task, after which the dependent variables' scores consisting of the evaluation of various social groups were collected. Only after these sections we asked about the support for various extremist environmental actions relevant to this paper. The possible effect of the manipulation on these latter variables was thus likely affected by the delay as well as the items following the delay. Although our check revealed no systematic statistically significant direct or indirect effect of the manipulation on the dependent variables that are the focus of this present study, we cannot rule out every possible effect of the manipulation.

⁴⁹ Daniela Pisoiu, Andreas Zick, Fabian Srowig, Viktoria Roth, and Katharina Seewald, "Factors of Individual Radicalization into Extremism, Violence and Terror – the German Contribution in a Context," *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (2020): 1–12.

⁵⁰ Gary Lafree, Michael A. Jensen, Patrick A. James, and Aaron Safer-Lichtenstein, "Correlates of Violent Political Extremism in the United States," *Criminology*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (2018): 233–68; Nele Schils and Lieven Pauwels, "Explaining Violent Extremism for Subgroups by Gender and Immigrant Background, Using SAT as a Framework," *Journal of Strategic Security*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2014): 27–47.

⁵¹ Daniel Koehler, "'The Fighting Made Me Feel Alive:' Women's Motivations for Engaging in Left-wing Terrorism: A Thematic Analysis," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, (2021): 1–16.

⁵² Jürgen W. Falter and Siegfried Schumann, "Affinity toward right-wing extremism in Western Europe," *West European Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1988): 96–110; Raul Gomez, Laura Morales, and Luis Ramiro, "Varieties of Radicalism: Examining the Diversity of Radical Left Parties and Voters in Western Europe," *West European Politics*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (2016): 351–79.

⁵³ Neil Ferguson and James W. McAuley, "Radicalization or Reaction: Understanding Engagement in Violent Extremism in Northern Ireland," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (2020): 215–30; P. G. Klandermans, "Identity Politics and Politicized Identities: Identity Processes and the Dynamics of Protest: Presidential Address," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (2014): 1–22.

in defense of such collective increases. Strongly identifying with the environment (the nature, the ecosystem) should likely open the way to support more radical action in its defense. We can also expect that support for environmental right-wing extremism correlates positively with national identification, as the concern for nation lies the heart of far-right ideology.

It has been also established that right-wing extremism correlates positively with a range of attitudes expressing firm embracement of one's ethnic ingroup as well as authoritarian values and hostility to ethnic out-groups.⁵⁴ Some personality traits have been linked to radicalization too – in this study, we provide data on neuroticism, one of the Big Five traits, which signals a volatile personality and is expected to correlate positively with support for extremism.⁵⁵ In the category of personality traits and attitudes we also examine perceived life control. Given that people are drawn to extremism in order to boost their feeling of certainty, security, and life meaning, manifesting support for extremism could be tied with displaying over-confidence in perceived personal control over one's life. We also include variables measuring perceived salient (radical) norms, as they have been demonstrated to guide people's attitudes and behavior.⁵⁶

Efficacy – the feeling that one's actions can achieve some valued outcome, has been shown to play an important role in political mobilization.⁵⁷ However, if activists come to the conclusion that decision-makers will ignore them regardless of their mainstream efforts (low external political efficacy), some could as a result resort to non-normative types of action, including extremist actions.⁵⁸ We also investigate efficacy beliefs linked to climate change. It is reasonable to expect that low faith in one's nation or the mankind as such to actually make any difference with respect to climate change is demobilizing for both normative and non-normative actions. Equally demobilizing should be the perception that man-made climate change is actually a hoax and/or that climate change is already unstoppable.

⁵⁴ Bert Klandermans and Nonna Mayer, *Extreme right activists in Europe through the magnifying glass* (London: Routledge, 2006).

⁵⁵ Simon Ozer and Preben Bertelsen, "Capturing violent radicalization: Developing and validating scales measuring central aspects of radicalization," *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 59, No. 6 (2018): 653–60.

⁵⁶ Markus Barth, Torsten Masson, Immo Fritsche, and Carolin-T. Ziemer, "Closing ranks: Ingroup norm conformity as a subtle response to threatening climate change," *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (2018): 497–512.

⁵⁷ Martijn van Zomeren, Tamar Saguy, and Fabian M. H. Schellhaas, "Believing in 'making a difference' to collective efforts: Participative efficacy beliefs as a unique predictor of collective action," *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, Vol. 16, No. 5 (2013): 618–34.

⁵⁸ Nicole Tausch et al., "Explaining radical group behavior: Developing emotion and efficacy routes to normative and nonnormative collective action.," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 101, No. 1 (2011): 129–48.

Finally, grievances are probably the quintessential ingredient in the process of radicalization⁵⁹ and we expect that holding strong grievances with respect to the state of the environment correlates positively with the support for environmental extremism. We would also expect that support for environmental left-wing extremism is motivated by the traditional left-wing grievances such as social inequalities.

Participants and method

The participants of both surveys were self-identified white Britons who were drawn from the panels of the online survey company Qualtrics and its partners. The samples approximated the age and biological sex composition of the white British population. The first survey (Survey 1) was conducted in September/October 2020 and there were 307 participants in its control condition (166 male and 141 female) with a mean age of 47 years. The second survey (Survey 2) was conducted in February 2021 and its control condition consisted of 293 participants (145 male and 148 female) with a mean age of 44. The sample in Survey 2 was independent of the sample in Survey 1.

Survey 1 consisted of two waves. The first wave (September 2020) included socio-demographic items and a number of items concerning psychological measures such as national and environmental identities, right-wing authoritarianism, and political efficacy (see the list of variables below). The second wave (October 2020) re-contacted the participants of the first wave and included the experimental manipulation (whose sample is left out in the present study), the control group items (the list of historical and geographical information about Britain) and, importantly, the dependent variables measuring the support for environmental extremism and ecofascist ideology (see the list of variables below). Survey 2 consisted of a single wave, where the manipulation/control was placed at the beginning, followed by the dependent variables and a few items measuring variables that are listed below.

Given the large number of variables tested and the fact that many of them were significantly correlated, our statistical method relies on analyzing correlations between the dependent variables and the host of potential covariates. We use Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation as this method is recommended for ordinal variables, which is almost all of the variables in this study.

Dependent variables

Support for Pro-Climate Extremist Action. This variable was measured by the mean score of two items on the 5-point Likert scale ($r_s=.74$ in Survey 1 and $.66$ in Survey 2). The participants were asked the following question: "Some people would say that

⁵⁹ Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, "Understanding political radicalization: The two-pyramids model," *American Psychologist*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (2017): 205–16; Jacqueliën van Stekelenburg and Bert Klandermans, "The social psychology of protest," *Current Sociology*, Vol. 61, Nos. 5–6 (2013): 886–905.

more radical actions by ordinary people are needed to protect the society and the environment. To what extent do you feel that the following actions by private citizens are justifiable?” The two items that make up this variable are 1) “Sabotaging the infrastructure of the UK’s biggest industrial emitters of greenhouse gases, such as coal power plants,” and 2) “Threatening with physical harm the top managers of the UK’s biggest industrial emitters of greenhouse gases, such as oil and coal companies.” The points of the scale were: “not at all” (scored as 1), “slightly,” “moderately,” “considerably,” and “completely” (scored as 5). The mean of the variable was 1.75 (SD = 1.09) in Survey 1 and 1.93 (SD = 1.08) in Survey 2. We consider respondents who scored 4 or higher as supportive of pro-climate extremist action.

Support for Ecofascist Action. This variable was measured by a single item “Patrolling predominantly immigrant neighborhoods in order to confront littering immigrants” in reply to the same question posed to the participants as above. It was measured on the same 5-point scale as the previous variable and it had a mean of 2.20 (SD = 1.34) in Survey 1 and 2.30 (SD = 1.31) in Survey 2. We consider respondents who scored 4 or 5 as supportive of ecofascist action.

Ecofascist Ideology. The extent to which the participants shared ecofascist ideology was measured by averaging the scores of their agreement on a 7-point Likert scale (strongly agree = 7) with two statements taken directly from the manifesto by Brenton Tarrant, the self-described ecofascist who committed the Christchurch terrorist attack in 2019. The statements were: 1) “Continued immigration into the Western countries is environmental warfare and ultimately destructive to nature itself” and 2) “The environment is being destroyed by over population, but we native British are one of the groups that are not over populating the world – the immigrants are the ones over populating the world.”⁶⁰ In Survey 1, the mean of the variable was 3.97 (SD = 1.56) and the Spearman correlation of the two items it was based on was .65. In Survey 2, the mean was 3.90 (SD = 1.59) and the Spearman correlation of the two items comprising the variable was .63. We consider respondents who scored 6 or higher as sharing ecofascist ideology.

Independent variables

In Survey 1, we measured the following variables grouped into four broad categories:

IDENTITY: British identity, identification with humanity, environmental identity, identification with environmentalists; PERSONALITY AND ATTITUDES: multiculturalism, ethnocentrism, social dominance orientation (SDO), right-wing authoritarianism (RWA), radical pro-environmental action norm, pro-immigration norm, trust in the mainstream media, left-right political self-classification, liberal-conservative political self-classification; EFFICACY: perceived global and national climate change

⁶⁰ Tarrant used “we Europeans” in the original, which we replaced by “we native British” to fit the context of the participants. Also, he used the term “invaders” instead of “immigrants,” which we contextualized as well.

efficacy,, internal and external political efficacy; GRIEVANCES: concern over climate change, concern over social inequality, perception of the negative impact of globalization on a) humans, b) the eco-system, c) on one-self.

In Survey 2, we measured variables in three categories: IDENTITY: British identity, identification with humanity, environmental identity, identification with environmentalists; PERSONALITY AND ATTITUDES: neuroticism, perceived life control; EFFICACY: perceived global and national climate change efficacy, the belief that human-made climate change is a hoax, the belief that climate change is unstoppable.

Both surveys also measured the following category of SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC variables: age, biological sex, level of education and household income.

The details regarding the measurement and basic statistics of the independent variables are described in the online supplement.

Results – survey 1

The results of the correlational analysis of the individual variables included in Survey 1 are displayed in Table 1. For easier interpretation, we omitted from the correlation table all columns other than those of the dependent variables, which means Table 1 (and all other tables in this study) does not display correlations between the independent variables themselves. Concerning the interpretation of the correlational strength, we decided against creating arbitrary cutoff points for various strengths of correlations (e.g., weak, moderate, and so on). The main reason is that we do not expect to see strong or even moderate correlations in the context of the phenomenon of extremism, which is known for lacking strong single predictors and rather emerges as an amalgamate of many factors combined. However, the *relative* strength of different statistically significant correlations is a valuable piece of data and will be drawn upon in the discussion.

Table 1. Spearman’s rank correlation coefficients of variables in Survey 1, $N = 307$.

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Starting the analysis with the relationship between the dependent variables, Table 1 shows that there is relative strong and positive correlation between the support for pro-climate extremist action and ecofascist action as well as between support for ecofascist action and ecofascist ideology. There is also a significant though relatively weaker positive correlation between ecofascist ideology and support for pro-climate extremist action.

Support for pro-climate extremist action is *positively* correlated with identification with humanity, identification with environmentalists, ethnocentrism, social dominance orientation, pro-climate radical action norm, pro-immigration norm, global climate efficacy, concern over social inequalities, and the perception that globalization negatively affects the ecosystem. Support for pro-climate extremist action is *negatively* correlated with age and external political efficacy.

Support for ecofascist action is *positively* correlated with male sex, British identity, ethnocentrism, social dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism, political right and conservative leaning, national climate efficacy, global climate efficacy, and the perception of globalization’s negative impact on the eco-system. Support for ecofascist action is *negatively* correlated with education, multiculturalism, pro-immigration norms, external political efficacy, and concern over social inequalities.

Ecofascist ideology is positively correlated with British identity, ethnocentrism, social dominance orientation right-wing authoritarianism, political right and conservative leaning, global climate efficacy, and the perception of globalization’s negative impact on the eco-system. Ecofascist ideology is *negatively* correlated with education, multiculturalism, pro-immigration norm, external political efficacy, concern over climate change, concern over social inequalities, and the perception of globalization’s negative impact on one-self.

With respect to the overall distribution of support for environmental extremism in the sample, 19 participants (6%) in Survey 1 scored 4 or higher on the measure of support for pro-climate extremist action (“considerably” or “completely” justified the action), and 58 participants (19%) on the measure of ecofascist action, while 41 participants (15%) scored 6 or higher on the measure of ecofascist ideology (“agree” or “strongly agree”).

Results – survey 2

We present the correlations of variables included in Survey 2 in Table 2

**Table 2. Spearman’s rank correlation coefficients of variables in Survey 2, $N = 293$.

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Beginning with the dependent variables, Table 2 shows a relatively strong positive correlation between support for pro-climate extremist action and ecofascist action as well as between support for ecofascist action and ecofascist ideology. There is also a relatively weaker positive correlation between ecofascist ideology and support for pro-climate extremist action.

Support for pro-climate extremist action is *positively* correlated with female sex, identification with the humanity, identification with environmentalists, neuroticism, the belief that climate change is a hoax, and the belief that climate change cannot be stopped. Support for pro-climate extremist action is *negatively* correlated with British identity and national climate efficacy.

Support for ecofascist action is *positively* correlated with political right leaning, the belief that man-made climate change is a hoax, and the belief that climate change cannot be stopped.

Ecofascist ideology is *positively* correlated with British identity, political right leaning, the belief that man-made climate change is a hoax, and the belief that climate

change cannot be stopped. Ecofascist ideology is *negatively* correlated with identification with the humanity.

Regarding the overall support for environmental extremism in the sample, 13 participants (4%) in Survey 2 scored 4 or higher on the measure of support for pro-climate extremist action, 56 participants (19%) scored 4 or higher on the measure of support for ecofascist action, and 40 participants (14%) scored 6 or higher on the measure of ecofascist ideology.

Results – overlaps between support for pro-climate extremist action and ecofascist action

Further analysis of the results shows that 13 participants (4%) scored high (4 or above) on the support for both pro-climate and ecofascist extremist action in Survey 1. In Survey 2, 10 participants (3%) scored high on the support for both actions. This means that only 6 participants (2%) in Survey 1 and 3 participants (1%) in Survey 2 scored high only on support for pro-climate extremist action (and not on ecofascist action), while 45 (15%) and 46 (16%) participants, in Survey 1 and Survey 2 respectively, scored high only on support for ecofascist action (but not on pro-climate extremist action).

Tables 3 and 4 break down the differences between the three groups. The variable “Both Groups” comprises of participants who scored high on support for both types of extremist action (coded as 1; all others coded as 0). The variable “Pro-Climate Action Only” includes participants who scored high only on support for extremist pro-climate action (coded as 1; all others coded as 0), while the variable “Ecofascist Action Only” includes participants who scored high only on support for ecofascist action (coded as 1; all others coded as 0). We employ logistic regression where the dependent variables are the support for the three types of extremist actions (i.e., both actions, only pro-climate action, and only ecofascist action). We conduct the regression for each independent variable separately to determine their relationship with the respective dependent variable.

Table 3. Logistic regression of the support for the three types of extremist action over each independent variable separately (Survey 1, $N = 307$, odds ratio).

[Download CSVDisplay Table](#)

Table 4. Logistic regression of the support for the three types of extremist action over each independent variable separately (Survey 2, $N = 293$, odds ratio).

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Although the dependent variables are highly imbalanced (especially the support for pro-climate action only), which makes it more difficult to receive statistically significant results, some general trends are discernible in the tables. Most importantly, the results suggest that participants who indicated support for *both* extremist actions share more characteristics with those endorsing ecofascist action rather than those who endorse

only pro-climate extremist action. These participants tend to lean politically right and conservative, be ethnocentric, negatively disposed to multiculturalism, and score high on right-wing authoritarianism. They also seem to be distinguished from the two other group by high scores on neuroticism.

Discussion

The exploratory analysis of the data from the two surveys generated several noteworthy results. The first important finding is that support for pro-climate extremist action does not seem to be associated solely with the political left. Tables 1 and 2 show that in both samples of respondents there was no statistically significant correlation between support for pro-climate extremist action and left or liberal self-classification. Further disaggregation (Tables 3 and 4) then suggests that this might be because the vast majority of the participants who endorsed pro-climate extremist action also endorsed ecofascist extremist action and has a decidedly right-wing political outlook. Whether those participants who endorsed only pro-climate extremist action (but not the ecofascist one) are left-wing oriented is questionable though, as their very small number makes the statistical results less reliable. Table 3 shows their positive though statistically not significant association with right-wing and conservative leaning (odds ratio larger than 1 means positive association, smaller than one a negative one), while Table 4 shows negative and marginally significant association with the political right ($p = .069$). Significant pro-immigration salient norms (Table 3) would also signal left-oriented political outlook. Nevertheless, our approach to use the support for pro-climate extremism as a proxy to left-wing environmental extremism appears unjustified and thus limits our ability to generalize the results to left-wing environmental extremism as such.

The second interesting point is that the participants who indicated higher levels of support for ecofascist action and ideology seem to have been driven more by the classical “fascist” outlook than the “eco” concerns. They tended to score high on right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, national identification, ethnocentrism, but low on identification with environmentalists (whom they probably regard as “left-ists”). In addition, they did not have heightened concern about climate change and tended to reject its man-made nature, which is understandable given the polarization over the issue. What is more surprising, however, is that they also did not identify more strongly with the environment. This could be an indication that contemporary ecofascists use the environmental card simply to justify their traditional fascist tropes – the so-called Avocado politics (green on the outside, brown on the inside inside).⁶¹ On the other hand, the results also show no significant positive association between environmental identity (and concern for climate change) and support for pro-climate extremist action. Moreover, the latter correlates positively with the belief that humans did not cause climate change and that climate change is unstoppable.

⁶¹ Spadaro, *Climate Change, Environmental Terrorism, Eco-Terrorism and Emerging Threats*.

This leads us to the third finding we would like to highlight, which is the importance of perceived social norms, especially ingroup norms, when it comes to endorsement of radical or violent actions.⁶² While support for pro-climate extremist action does not seem to be correlated with increased identification with the environment or concern about the climate change, we found that it correlates positively and significantly with the belief that most people from one's social surrounding endorse radical pro-climate action. This orientation toward other humans (and their norms) is also underscored by the positive correlation between support for pro-climate extremist action and identification with environmentalists. The social factors seem to be more important than the mere existence of grievances (concern about climate change) or positive disposition toward inanimate objects (identification with the environment/nature). Similarly, we found support for ecofascist action to be negatively and significantly correlated with pro-immigrant norms believed to be held by one's ingroup, which again signifies the importance of the social dimension to extremism.

The fourth highlight relates to the role of external political efficacy, which is a construct measuring the belief in the responsiveness of the political system. Very few studies have so far examined the relationship between external political efficacy and the support for violent political action⁶³ and our finding supports their conclusions that the relationship is negative. Our data suggest that those participants who did not believe they had a say in what their government does and felt that politicians do not even listen to what they have to say were more likely to endorse both types of extremist action. This finding underlines the importance of providing people with effective political avenues for redressing grievances and a responsive and accountable political system, in which everyone feels represented and with some degree of influence. This could be hard to achieve though for those people whose demands are illiberal, unconstitutional, illegal, or simply with little public support, and hence making the accurate impression that they can never be realized through normative political action.

The fifth point worth mentioning is the relatively strong correlation between neuroticism and support for simultaneously both pro-climate and ecofascist extremism. Even though we already discussed that pro-climate extremism cannot be simply labeled as left-wing extremism, we would argue that it is still a distinct type of extremism relative to ecofascism as illustrated by its positive association with pro-immigration norms, identification with environmentalist and the humanity, or the concern about

⁶² N. Pontus Leander et al., "Frustration-affirmation? Thwarted goals motivate compliance with social norms for violence and nonviolence," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 119, No. 2 (2020): 249–71; Fergus G. Neville, "Preventing violence through changing social norms," in Peter D. Donnelly and Catherine L. Ward, eds., *Oxford Textbook of Violence Prevention* (Oxford University Press, 2014): 239–44.

⁶³ Maria S. Heering, Giovanni A. Travaglino, Dominic Abrams, and Emily Goldsack, "'If they don't listen to us, they deserve it:' The effect of external efficacy and anger on the perceived legitimacy of hacking," *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, Vol. 23, No. 6 (2020): 863–81; Tausch et al., *Explaining radical group behavior*.

social inequalities. Such sentiments are usually found on the left of the political spectrum. That there is a group of people who have no qualms in endorsing both of these, arguably somewhat ideologically inconsistent, actions, and that they tend to score high on neuroticism, point to the role of mental health in explaining some of the non-ideologically driven extremism,⁶⁴ since neuroticism has been linked to aggression and mental distress⁶⁵ as well as radicalization.⁶⁶

As a final observation we note that support for ecofascist action and ideology seems to be much stronger among the participants relative to support for pro-climate extremist action. This could have been caused by perceived inequality of the seriousness of the two actions. Sabotaging power plants and issuing threats to CEOs could have been regarded as more risky, illegal, and in the end more extreme, than confronting littering immigrants. The markedly anti-immigrant mood (on the political right) in the context of Brexit⁶⁷ could have made the latter action more socially acceptable as well. Yet, and despite the fact that the samples were not fully representative of the UK majority (white) population, the level of agreement on ecofascist tenets (around 15%), directly transposed from a manifesto of a mass-killer, is worrisome.

With respect to socio-demographic variables, the data do not show strong consistent results. There is some indication that support for ecofascist action and ideology is higher among the less educated and men, whereas pro-climate extremist action finds more support among the younger, more educated and women.

As in other quantitative studies of public support for extremist or terrorist action, our results need to be qualified by stressing that indication of support for certain action does not mean the actual willingness to commit such action. Our research design is cross-sectional as opposed to experimental, hence the independent variables explored in this study should not be viewed as causing the support for extremist action or ideology.

Social desirability bias – the tendency to hold back true answers to appear in line with mainstream social attitudes and behavior – could have influenced our results too in case of such a sensitive topic. We can find some assurance that this bias was minimal by the fact that the surveys were conducted online under highlighted assurance of anonymity and not supervised by a person or set in a group context, which could have put more psychological pressure on participants to conform to the social mainstream.

⁶⁴ Oluf Gøtzsche-Astrup and Lasse Lindekilde, “Either or? Reconciling Findings on Mental Health and Extremism using a Dimensional Rather than Categorical Paradigm,” *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (2019): 982–8.

⁶⁵ Vibeke H. Dam et al., “Five-factor personality is associated with aggression and mental distress in violent offenders,” *European Neuropsychopharmacology*, Vol. 28 (2018): S35–6; Ian McGregor, Joseph Hayes, and Mike Prentice, “Motivation for aggressive religious radicalization: goal regulation theory and a personality × threat × affordance hypothesis,” *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 6 (2015).

⁶⁶ Ozer and Bertelsen, *Capturing violent radicalization*.

⁶⁷ Piotr Cap, “Immigration and Anti-migration Discourses: The Early Rhetoric of Brexit,” *The Language of Fear* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017), pp. 67–79.

Another qualification of the results is due to the low number of “positive outcomes” (i.e., participants deemed supportive of extremism) when it comes to the analysis of the characteristics of the three distinct groups of participants endorsing pro-climate extremist action, ecofascist action, and both actions, respectively. Here, we can be encouraged by the fact that we still find statistically significant correlations, which in most cases can be satisfactorily explained. We also inspected the responses of those participants who indicated support for both pro-climate and ecofascist actions, as they could have been simply “straight-liners,” i.e. people who sped up through the survey by ticking same answers for all questions in a line. We did not find that these participants completed the survey quicker than others or that their responses would follow a certain pattern. As a final robustness test, we included in the sample the participants from the treatment condition of the original experiment (which did not seem to have an effect on our dependent variables) and so doubling the number of observations. We also ran simple and multiple regression analyses with the dependent variable (support for extremist action and ideology) measured as an interval (rather than dichotomous outcome). The main results highlighted in this discussion remained unchanged.

Finally, as stated earlier, our samples are not fully representative of the British white population, therefore future studies with different settings would be needed before making firm suggestions about generalizability, including to countries beyond the UK.

Conclusion

In this paper, we explored socio-demographic and psychological correlates of support for two types of extremist actions – pro-climate action and ecofascist action – as proxies to left-wing and right-wing environmental extremism. We were inspired, on the one hand, by the fact that both types of action are said to become prevalent in the near future in the context of worsening impact of climate change and conflict over resources between various social groups. On the other hand, the existing literature on climate change, environmental degradation, or extremism and terrorism does not investigate factors that correlate with support for environmental extremism.

Our results suggest that while support for pro-climate extremist action is not limited to the political left, support for ecofascist action and ideology is firmly rooted on the political right. We also find that the latter two are predicted by the traditional far-right determinants such as ethnocentrism, right-wing authoritarianism, and rejection of multiculturalism rather than environmental concerns. However, and surprisingly, concern about climate change and identification with the environment do not positively correlate with support for pro-climate action either. Rather, we show that support for both types of extremist action is associated with corresponding perceptions of the prevailing norms in one’s social surrounding. In addition, there seems to be a group of people who are ready to support both types of action and whose motivation could be linked more to personality factors and mental health than to ideology. Finally, we show

that the relationship between external political efficacy and support for extremism is negative, suggesting that improving the responsiveness of political elites could take away some support for political violence.

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